

Claims

1. A screen applied to overlay a gutter on an outside edge of a roof of a building said screen comprising a panel of generally planar mesh affixed along one edge of the panel to the roof and along the opposite edge of the panel to the top outside edge of the gutter, the mesh being formed of moulded plastics material and the panel having an electrically powered heating strand extending along the panel in the direction of said one edge of the panel.

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2. A screen according to claim 1 wherein said mesh is formed of an electrically insulating polymer material.

3. A screen according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the heating strand is a wire having an electrically insulating coating thereon.

4. A screen according to any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein the heating strand is integrally moulded into the mesh.

20 5. A screen according to any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein the heating strand is threaded through holes through the mesh.

6. A screen according to any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein the heating strand is tied to the mesh.

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7. A screen according to any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein the heating strand is retained on the mesh by being looped around free ends or protuberances formed on the mesh.

30 8. A screen according to any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein the heating strand is retained by clips which are in turn themselves retained within holes through the mesh.

9. A screen according to any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein the strand is retained by being clipped into a channel formed longitudinally in the mesh.

10. A screen according to any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein the heating strand is affixed 5 to the mesh by being looped into or around itself and through holes in the mesh.

11. A screen according to any one of claims 1 to 10 wherein the mesh comprises:

- a top face and a bottom face on respective opposite sides of the mesh,
- a first array of parallel strands, hereinafter called longitudinal strands, aligned 10 in the direction of said one edge of the panel, and
- a second array of parallel strands, hereinafter called lateral strands, integrally moulded with and aligned at right angles to the first array, said first and second arrays of strands defining mesh apertures therebetween extending from said top face to said bottom face,
- the thickness of the longitudinal strands extends for substantially the full 15 thickness of the mesh from said top face to said bottom face, and
- the thickness of the lateral strands extends along their full length, from said top face to less than 80% of the thickness of the mesh.

20 12. A screen according to claim 11 wherein the lateral strands are spaced closer to each other than are the longitudinal strands.

13. A screen according to claim 11 or 12 wherein the apertures have an oval shape with 25 their longer axis parallel to the lateral strands.

14. A screen according to any one of claims 11 to 13 wherein a flat strip portion lies along said opposite edge of the panel and parallel to the longitudinal strands, said strip portion being substantially flat on its top face which blends gently with said top face of the remainder of the mesh.

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15. A screen according to any one of claims 11 to 14 wherein the lateral strands are made from a stiffer material than that from which the longitudinal strands are made.

16. A screen according to claim 15 wherein the lateral strands are formed from a material having a greater elastic resilience than the material from which the longitudinal strands are made.

5 17. A screen according to claim 15 wherein the lateral strands are high density polyethylene and the longitudinal strands are a mixture of low density polyethylene and high density polyethylene and the mesh is formed using a plastics co-extrusion process.

10 18. A screen according to claim 14 wherein the mesh is affixed to the gutter by means of mating strips of a textile hook and loop fastening system adhered to said flat strip portion and to said top outside edge of the gutter.

15 19. A screen according to any one of claims 1 to 18 wherein the mesh is affixed to the gutter by means of screws through the flat strip portion.

20. A sheet mesh of plastics material for application upon or above a roof gutter to prevent the entry of unwanted materials into the gutter, said mesh comprising:

- a first face and a second face on respective opposite sides of the mesh, and
- a first array of parallel strands aligned in a first direction integrally moulded with a second array of parallel strands aligned substantially at right angles to the first array, said strands defining mesh apertures therebetween,

20 wherein a pair of strands in the first array are adapted to clasp therebetween an electrical resistance heating wire.

25 21. A method of reducing the downward force of snow upon a mesh screen extended above a gutter on an outside edge of a roof of a building for the purpose of preventing the entry of unwanted materials into the gutter, said screen comprising a panel of mesh in a generally planar form affixed along one edge of the panel to the roof and along the opposite edge of the panel to the top outside edge of the gutter, said method comprising applying, when snow is covering the mesh, an electric current to an electrical heating strand extending along the mesh in the direction of said one edge of the panel.

22. A method according to claim 19 wherein the mesh is formed of moulded plastics material and the electrical heating strand is an electrically insulated wire fastened to the mesh.